

**Subject:** Re: Consultation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas  
**From:** Eric Taylor <eric\_taylor@dot.state.ak.us>  
**Date:** Fri, 06 Feb 2004 14:57:43 -0900  
**To:** Bruce Carr <CARRB@akrr.com>  
**CC:** stip@dot.state.ak.us, Bob Laurie <Bob\_Laurie@dot.state.ak.us>

Dear Mr.Carr:

Thank you for your input. The process we promulgated has a very narrow focus and purpose -- to provide an avenue of consultation for officials of local non-metropolitan general purpose government with DOTPF concerning the STP and STIP. It is intentionally written this way in order to fulfill the federal requirement it addresses.

I'm lifting a few quotes, from Jeff Ottesen's responses to others concerning this process, that I think are helpful in explaining why we put this out and what its intended purpose is:

"The national interest groups that forced the agency to adopt this national regulation were primarily local government advocates, who felt left out by their many different state DOTs. I heard stories of local governments not seeing or talking to their state DOT representative for years at a time. In fact many states are now adopting the practice of having someone assigned to talk to them on a routine and repetitive basis, something we've had formally set up in Alaska for nearly 20 years.

Our normal and routine public involvement procedures, and our tribal government consultation policy is still clearly in place. Our new non-metropolitan consultation policy is meant to fulfill a federal mandate that we have, on paper, such a written policy. But it does not elevate local governments to some higher level of influence, nor mean that other interests are left out.

Please bear in mind this national regulation is attacking a problem experienced in many different states, with many different approaches to working with their interest groups. After listening to my counter parts in other states talk about what they do (or don't do) I came away with a clear impression that Alaska has a very good model for taking public input, far better than many other states. For example, many states have no formal method for project nomination not originating from state DOT staff. We do, and have done so for nearly 10 years.

One other difference. The new state policy for non-metropolitan governments addresses only the statewide transportation plan and STIP process. It does not speak to aviation, harbors, maintenance, contracting, hiring, transfers of responsibility or other matters we routinely must work through."

Please keep in mind that ARRC presently enjoys two significant avenues of access and influence to our planning processes that are not limited by the constraints of planning update cycles: (1) through the DOT&PF Commissioner's seat on ARRC's board of directors, and (2) through Bob Laurie 907-465-6989, our designated rail planner. We welcome and encourage further intermodal cooperation with ARRC.

Sincerely,  
Eric Taylor  
Division of Program Development

Bruce Carr wrote:

Jeff,

I recommend an additional category be added to your process which ensures that all modes of transportation be consulted as part of the formal consultation process. Some modes, for example the Alaska Railroad, have transportation responsibility, are government owned, but are not managed by "elected or appointed officials".

The Alaska Railroad is the recipient of federal funds, is an officially designated agency by the Governor to receive such funds, and have project interface which all modes of transportation such as highways, airports, ports, pedestrian walkways, etc. Our projects must be included in the STP and STIP per federal regulations. It is critical that intermodal cooperation extend beyond just "public processes" and ensure true coordination of multi-modal projects by including all modes in the formal consultation process.

Bruce Carr  
Dir., Strategic Planning  
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Nearly all the historical work worth doing at the present moment in the English language is the work of shoveling off heaps of rubbish inherited from the immediate past.

-Henry Cabot Lodge